

MEDIA RELEASE

**Attention: News Director
For Immediate Release
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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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Western District of Kentucky**

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**MEMPHIS MAN CONVICTED OF MULTI-STATE CONSPIRACY TO PASS
COUNTERFEIT PAYROLL CHECKS**

David L. Huber, United States Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky, announced today that **MICHAEL L. SANDERS**, age 31, originally from 7198 McCleskey, Cordova, TN, was **found guilty** by a federal jury in United States District Court, Owensboro Division, Kentucky, of knowingly conspiring to commit an offense against the United States by making, uttering, and possessing a forged security of an organization which operates in interstate commerce.

The jury's verdict of guilty was returned following a three day trial before Judge Joseph H. McKinley, Jr., Judge, United States District Court.

Sanders had been tried for conspiring with others in June and July of 2003, to create and pass counterfeit payroll checks in Evansville, Indiana; Henderson, Kentucky; Bowling Green, Kentucky; Owensboro, Kentucky; Louisville, Kentucky; and Danville, Illinois. Sanders and his co-conspirators would travel to a city where they would rent a hotel room and set up computer equipment to create counterfeit checks purportedly drawn on local businesses and local banks. **Sanders** would then drive to low income areas and recruit people to cash the fraudulent checks. The people recruited would give **Sanders** their identification. **Sanders** would then return to the hotel room and make the counterfeit payroll checks on the computer. **Sanders** obtained legitimate business names from local telephone books to place on the checks. Once checks were printed,

Sanders and his co-conspirators would then drive the recruits to a local grocery, convenience store, or liquor store to cash the counterfeit checks. Once checks were cashed, the recruits would return to the vehicle and give the money to **Sanders**. **Sanders** would then divide the cash and give a percentage to the recruit.

Co-defendant Ponell Johnson plead guilty and was sentenced in October 2006 to two years and six months imprisonment.

The maximum potential penalties are up to five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and supervised release for a period of up to three years.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Marisa J. Ford and was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and officers with the Owensboro Police Department, Bowling Green Police Department, and the Danville Police Department.

Sanders is scheduled to be sentenced before Judge Joseph H. McKinley, Jr. on June 4, 2007, at 9:00 a.m., in Owensboro, Kentucky.

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